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A Visit to the

Leper-Asylum at Chandkuri, India

OSCAR NUSSMANN



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Introduction

One day an English official, who had recently been transferred to Purulia and was just returning from a morning's gallop, paid a visit to the now sainted missionary, Rev. Mr. Uffmann. After being seated on the veranda of the mission bungalow, the officer said: "This morning I have had an unusual experience. I thought I had explored every nook and corner of this neighborhood, finding nothing unusual—only hills, ponds, rice-fields and villages. Especially



Center View of Claire Leper Asylum

the villages seemed to be monotonously similar in appearance. You know yourself their general appearance—a cluster of small huts of clay with roofs made of straw, no windows, and only an opening for a door, narrow, crowded passages for streets, crowded by dirty goats and naked children. But this morning I came to a village which was totally different. From a distance it seemed to be a settlement for Europeans. I saw a good number of well-built white-washed buildings, shaded by well-kept trees. The center of the village was marked by a fine church. But when I came nearer and passed thru the regular wide streets, I was astonished not to find a single European. All the people I met there were natives, and all

were well dressed, no naked children anywhere in sight. I have been in India for a number of years but have never seen anything like this. Can you tell me what kind of a settlement that is?"

"Yes, I believe I can tell you that," said the missionary. "I suppose the village you saw lies a short distance west from here. Well, that is our leper asylum. The people living there are all lepers and because most of them have become Christians, a church has been built for them." Modesty forbade the missionary to add that he himself was the founder, builder, and superintendent of this model institution.

Had the visitor been a man of another nature, he might, after such an explanation, have experienced the feeling that came to the rider, who unwittingly crossed a river frozen over with ice. After the danger was safely passed he became sick with fright. Many people are deathly afraid of infectious diseases, especially of leprosy. A wealthy traveller once paid a visit to a mission in India, and was very anxious to be shown all the sights. No one, however, could prevail upon him to enter a leper asylum. When he did have to pass near to one, he first took note of the direction of the wind and then passed on the side that seemed safer. Others show more fear. The superintendent of one leper asylum was informed that certain ladies with whom he had correspondence would not touch his letters with their fingers, but used pincers; while another superintendent noticed that while he was on furlough in the homeland many people anxiously kept at a safe distance.—Well, this English official did not express any fear, but he expressed something better, respect for that which is possible because of the love of Christ.

And that, dear reader, is also the aim of this booklet, namely by tracing the beginning and development of our own leper asylum at Chandkuri to show the wondrous power of Christ's love. May this story also awaken some fear in our hearts, fear because of the little that has after all been done for these poorest of the poor. Finally, may this booklet also be a cause of an epidemic, not of some dread disease, but of an epidemic of greater love for this cause. For this purpose, dear reader, I invite you to come with me and pay a visit to our leper asylum in Chandkuri.

I. On Our Way to the Asylum

We shall spend no time in a description of the steamer trip from America to India, nor of the journey by railroad from Bombay to Raipur. A description of this kind is to be found in many books of travel. But at Raipur we must leave the beaten track of the globe-trotter and take to sidepaths, where the missionary is more at home and a better guide. Globe-trotters leave such incon-

venient sidetracks severely alone and then claim, that there is little to be seen of mission work in the Orient. Our destination is 49 miles distant on the main road leading from Raipur to Bilaspur. The missionaries at Raipur are kind enough to put their automobile at our disposal, otherwise we would have to use an oxcart, called a *tanga* in Hindi. Until recently this was the usual conveyance for missionaries, causing the loss of much valuable time in travelling.



Rev. Oscar Nussmann and Wife

The distance, for instance, which we hope to make in a few hours this morning, could not be accomplished in less than two days with a *tanga*. And then consider the inconvenience of your meals and passing the night on the road. No, for speed and convenience, the *automobile* is certainly much to be preferred to the *oxomobile*, and we take our seat in the former with hearty thanks to the kind missionary and also to the good mission friends who have provided him with this helpful and convenient means of travel.

The road we now travel is one of the few good ones to be found in Chhattisgarh. During recent years the Government has spent large sums on its improvement. The rivers and rivulets that formerly retarded the progress of the traveller and sometimes led to interesting or even dangerous experiences have all been bridged, and we need anticipate no adventures on their account. Both sides of the road are lined with shade trees, which fact will be much appreciated by us as the sun rises higher and higher and its heat becomes more and more intense. The country thru which we pass is level and uninteresting. Those of us who expected to see beautiful scenery as palm trees, dense jungles with wonderful flowers and teem-



Superintendent's Residence

ing with animal life, will be sorely disappointed. For such scenery you must go to the coast districts. Here we see very few trees. The rice-fields have already been cut, there is nothing to see but the characteristic Indian villages appearing every mile or half-mile nearer or farther away from the road. We see one or two small temples on the roadside, otherwise nothing to excite our interest. After a ride of three hours, we pass the oldest mission station of Chhattisgarh, Bistrampur, but cannot pay a visit there because of lack of time. We admire the square steeple of the Bistrampur Church towering above the cluster of trees, and get a glimpse of a

few of the mission buildings; the remainder of the station is hidden from our sight by many trees surrounding the building.

Ten miles farther on we approach Chandkuri. The country round about is, if anything, still more monotonous than that seen elsewhere. The view of the station, however, is by contrast so much more imposing. We see a cluster of white buildings on both sides of the road. To the right the two mission bungalows and a little farther on the large church with high steeple. Beyond and behind the church lies the Christian village of Baitalpur. To the left of the road appear the buildings of the leper asylum, forming by themselves a good sized village. In between all these gleaming white



Mr. and Mrs. Waggoner and Guests

buildings numerous green trees and shrubs help to make the picture a most pleasing one. The view is so unexpected that you may be led to believe that the blue sky and the air quivering with heat have played you a trick and shown you a Fata Morgana. The Chandkuri Leper Asylum is in reality an oasis in the desert, not a dark, forbidding and sinister looking institution, but a pleasing, home-like, hope-inspiring village. Were we to pass the asylum and ride on 24 miles further to the next railroad station, Bilaspur, we might also inquire like the English official, "I have passed thru a peculiar village today." Well-built houses, wide streets, nice lawns, even a church, but only natives to be seen. What may it have been? Well, we need not inquire: we are not going to pass by, but will call

on Rev. H. T. Waggoner, who is the present superintendent, and whose home is in one of the two mission bungalows. The horn of our auto has already announced our arrival to him, and there he comes with wife and children to welcome us.

II. Facts Concerning Leprosy

The bungalow which we now enter is the smallest of the mission. It contains but few rooms. The walls are whitewashed and the furniture is very simple. After we have rid ourselves of most of the dust gathered on our trip we have time for a little rest and chat, seated in comfortable wicker chairs. It is too late to take a walk over to the asylum now, as it is half-past ten and breakfast is due at eleven. In India, *Chhota hazri*, or first breakfast is taken at six in the morning, and consists usually of tea, toast and some fruit. *Hazri*, or breakfast, is taken at eleven, and corresponds more to our American dinner than to a breakfast. The half hour left before breakfast we pass by plying our host with questions.

First of all we want to know: *what precautions do you take to avoid infection?*

Mr. Waggoner answers smilingly: That is not as difficult as it seems to be. There is very little need of my touching the lepers, as some inmates of the asylum whose hands are still in good condition are trained to bandage the wounds of the others. The danger of infection also is not nearly as great as most people suppose. Missionaries have worked for years amongst these people without being infected. A case that occurred in South Africa proves that many people are practically immune to this disease. Some thirty years ago a young married man proved to be a leper. The Government ordered him to be transported to the leper colony on Robin Island. His wife wished to accompany him, but was denied permission. When finally the young man was actually to be taken away the wife cut a deep gash into her arm and rubbing the same on one of the leprous ulcers of her husband cried: "Now I also am a leper; now you cannot prevent me from going with my husband." Her wish was granted. For several years she nursed her husband until he died, and then she remained in the asylum to nurse other lepers. Not the least sign of leprosy has however been discovered on the woman.

On the other side, undeniable cases of infection have been proven. Thus, Rev. Uffmann, the founder of the large Purulia asylum, was led to devote his life to the lepers after his oldest daughter had been infected. The story of an English lady who wore a Chinese wig to a mask ball and eighteen months later showed definite symptoms of leprosy, is well known.

Nobody denies that leprosy is infectious, but just how the dis-

case is carried from one person to another is not definitely known. It is quite certain, however, that only persons specially susceptible, such as undernourished or other persons of a weak constitution will be infected, also that the bacillus needs a long time for development. To wear clothes worn by a leper is undoubtedly very dangerous. Now no sensible person will do that knowingly. In India, however, such things may happen, where the laundry-men often wear the clothing given to them before washing it. A case of leprosy developed in the family of a certain missionary. Upon investigation it was discovered that the washerman who handled the



Dressing the Wounds of a Leper Patient

laundry of this family was a leper and the probable source of infection. Indian washermen often wash laundry in ponds where lepers are accustomed to bathe. And thus you need not necessarily be superintendent of an asylum to be exposed to leprosy. But as mentioned before, there is fortunately very little danger of infection if you observe the rules of sanitation and have a healthy constitution. If you wash hands and face with some disinfectant after each visit to the asylum you are quite safe. All money passed thru the asylum is disinfected.

How do you recognize a leper as such, and is it easy to diagnose leprosy, is probably our next question.

No, it is not. There are many diseases showing similar symptoms. There are also two kinds of leprosy, the nervous and tuberculous types. In the former kind, the peripheral nerves are attacked first of all. They become inflamed and degenerate, causing the cells and organs controlled by them also to degenerate. The

skin in spots and patches changes its color. The parts lose all sensation, the tissues die, ulcers form, and parts of the body, especially finger and toe tips, gradually decay and fall away.

The tuberculous type of leprosy, however, first attacks the skin and lymphatic glands. Many nodules are formed, covering sometimes the whole body. They degenerate and form ulcers. After the disease has advanced to some extent it is easily recognized, but this is difficult in the beginning. Light colored spots on the body, in which no pain is felt if pricked deeply with a needle, are fairly definite, tho not conclusive signs of leprosy.

If leprosy is discovered in the person, what do the other members of the family do?

Those who contract leprosy try to hide the fact as long as possible and often succeed in doing so for a long time. If a woman becomes a leper she will probably, tho not in all cases, be expelled from the home. If it is a man, he often remains with his family until death. If, however, the man is poor, his relatives will probably expel him as soon as he cannot work, and thus becomes a burden to the family. Hindus, as a rule, do not fear infection very much. They believe in fate, namely, that whatever has been foreordained will happen, no matter what one does. There are many leprous washermen, candymakers, and merchants who continue unhindered in their business. Thus while many lepers are cast out by their families, the number who are permitted to remain in their homes is quite large.

What do the natives do for the outcast lepers?

Very little. A leper begging in a village may receive a penny or a handful of rice from some Hindu who wishes to gain merit, but no organized effort is made in his behalf. The Hindu religion has created hospitals for sick cows and monkeys, but not for sick men. Hindus believe that leprosy is a punishment inflicted by God upon a person for some grave sin committed in a former life. To help a leper, therefore, is to act counter to the will of God.

Oh what a dreadful religion! *But has not the Government taken steps to provide for the outcast lepers, and for their isolation from the healthy community so as to prevent the further increase of the disease?*

The Government meddles as little as possible with the private affairs of the natives. The people would not recognize the value of such interference and therefore bitterly oppose it. In India nearly all matters are connected with caste and religion, and the Government has promised to be strictly neutral in these things. A Leper Act has been passed, which deals however, with such destitute lepers who in begging for alms expose their wounds, or lepers whose

trade or profession make them a danger to the community at large. Such lepers may be arrested and sent to a Government asylum. But this act is in force in only small sections of India, mainly in the large cities, and even there is not rigorously enforced. Hence, very few lepers are detained under the leper act. Lepers do not care to go to a Government asylum. It is very difficult for the Government to find superintendents who are willing to accept such an undesirable position. It therefore prefers, if possible, to erect such asylums in connection with mission asylums, and place the lepers under the charge of missionaries. Thus a number of Government wards have been added to our Chandkuri asylum, where destitute



Leper Women and Temporary Huts of Bamboo and Straw, Built before Permanent Wards Were Erected

lepers may be sent by the courts and kept at Government expense, tho under the supervision of the mission.

At this point our interesting conversation is interrupted by one of the servants, Bilwa, who enters the room with the words: *Khana tayar hai*, meaning, dinner is served. An interesting person, this Bilwa. In his long white coat and snow white turban he makes a neat appearance, tho his color is dark and feet are bare. He has taken great pains in setting our table this morning. The butter is pressed in special forms, the napkins are skillfully folded, and the table is prettily decorated with flowers. Bilwa certainly

must be an ideal house servant. That is one matter in which missionaries have the advantage over us.

Well, thereby hangs a tale, as Kipling would say. Books could be written on this subject. In many cases it may be questioned whether the service rendered by a servant is worth the trouble he makes. Bilwa, for instance, is not only adept at setting a table, but also skillful at procuring things for his own table. He has peculiar ideas concerning property rights. He reasons, as do many servants: I am the property of the Sahib, so if I take the Sahib's belongings, they are still his. Once when he was dismissed from service because of putting this philosophy into practice, he came to his missionary with an open Bible in his hand, pointing to Matthew 18: 21: How often must I forgive my brother, etc. Well, very often has Bilwa been forgiven, and he is still in the service. But we want to see and partake of that which he has prepared for us.

First comes a course of oatmeal. Then Bilwa brings a large dish of rice, cooked in Indian fashion, that is, for a short time only, so that each kernel is still separate and glistening white. To this we add curry, which may be made of any vegetable or meat cooked in a well spiced sauce. Curry and rice is the national dish of India, and is never omitted from the menu. Finally, Bilwa brings some Indian fruit, when ends our typical Indian meal. After the meal we are allowed to retire to our rooms to rest until two o'clock. These are the hottest hours of the day, which everybody who can manage to do so spends in the shelter of a roof.

III. How the Asylum Was Founded

Being refreshed by our siesta and a cup of tea, we proceed to the other mission bungalow only a hundred yards distant to greet Rev. J. C. Koenig. He and his family bid us a hearty welcome. Rev. Koenig is now in charge of the general station work, but we soon discover that for several years he also had charge of the asylum. No doubt, the asylum must have an interesting history, so we proceed to question him concerning this. Rev. Koenig is quite ready to give us the desired information.

The asylum was definitely organized during the famine of 1896 to 1897. For some years previous, however, the missionaries had had dealings with lepers. It was discovered that the mother of one of the Christians living at Baitalpur was a leper. A small hut was built for her in a corner of the mission property. A number of outcast lepers living in the neighborhood also repeatedly came to the missionaries for help. In a village some distance away from Baitalpur lived three brothers, all lepers. The oldest of these, Jattan, desired to become a Christian. The missionaries

tried to place an evangelist in that village to instruct Jattan and others but could not obtain the permission of the village owner. The only other course to help Jattan was to place him in some leper asylum, but none was available. This problem of caring for the lepers who appealed to the mission was exercising the mind of Rev. K. W. Nottrott, when the suggestion to appeal to the newly organized Mission to Lepers, with headquarters in Edinburgh, was made by Rev. Hahn of the Gossner Mission. This suggestion was acted



Rev. J. Koenig and Family

upon, and on February 22nd, 1897, the first grant of \$120 was received toward the erection of a leper asylum in Baitalpur.

The beginning was a very small one. In the northeast corner of the mission compound a few temporary huts were built. Jattan, his two brothers, and three other lepers were the first inmates. Soon after this a larger grant was received from Edinburgh, and

the missionary planned to erect an asylum for about twenty lepers. Before this plan could be executed, however, it became necessary to enlarge it. For 1897 was the first year of a series of famines, which cost the lives of thousands of people in India. The outcast lepers were the first to feel the pinch of hunger. When others had little to eat, there was nothing left for them. No sooner, therefore, had the news of the founding of an asylum in Chandkuri been spread in the villages when great numbers of lepers began to flock there.

In February, the asylum started with eight inmates, by June the number had increased to forty, and before the close of the year the number reached one hundred, with about twenty untainted or healthy children of leper parents.

A long roughly made building of stone with many rooms sheltered the first lepers. Soon it was filled and temporary huts, built of clay and bamboos, had to be erected. The lepers received the necessary food and clothing, and in spite of his many labors increased by the burdens of a famine year, Rev. Nottrott found time to preach the Gospel to them. His efforts were not in vain. In fact, the lepers proved to be especially prepared for the Gospel message. In December, 1897, on the occasion of the visit of Mr. Thomas Bailey, Secretary of the Mission to Lepers, Rev. Nottrott had the joy of baptizing the first-fruits of the leper work in Chandkuri.

Soon after this, Rev. Nottrott experienced another great joy. The Duchess of Grafton had heard of the leper work in Chandkuri, and made a large contribution towards it. It was thus possible to move the asylum from its crowded site directly adjoining a community of healthy people to a more fitting location. When Rev. Nottrott endeavored to buy a suitable site, however, he found that the Hindus had made an agreement not to sell him any land for this purpose. They did not want a community of lepers in their neighborhood. Finally a plot of fifteen acres was secured from a native Christian, Jagdeo. This site is just opposite the road from the Christian village of Baitalpur, and with adjoining pieces of land acquired later, forms the present compound of the asylum. As this land is within the boundaries of the village Chandkuri, the asylum is officially known as the Chandkuri Leper Asylum.

As soon as the necessary land was acquired permanent buildings were erected. These were built solidly of stone in lime. Two wells were dug, one for the asylum and another in the home for untainted children. Permanent buildings could, however, not be put up quickly enough and very often temporary shelters had to accommodate many of the inmates. By March, 1900, the number of inmates had grown to 185 lepers with 60 untainted children, and by

January, 1902, the number had increased to 383 adult lepers, 29 leper children, and 67 untainted children. As great numbers of lepers embraced Christianity, a church soon became a necessity. Its foundation stone was laid in 1900, and the plain but beautiful structure dedicated to the worship of the Triune God in 1902.

When in 1904 Rev. Nottrott left on a well earned and long overdue furlough to America, he could look back upon splendid results of his labors in Baitalpur. Besides the results in other branches of mission work a model leper asylum, the second largest in India, had been created. The institution had a good number of permanent and some temporary wards for lepers, a good dispensary, a splendid church, and separate homes for lepers and untainted children. The number of inmates exceeded four hundred, of whom the majority had been led to Christ.



Leper Congregation Leaving the Church

Rev. Nottrott's place was taken by Rev. H. H. Lohaus. Unfortunately he could remain only a year when he was transferred to take charge of the catechist school in Raipur. His successor was Rev. E. Tillmanns, 1905 to 1906, who left to organize a new station at Mahasamudra, when Mr. W. H. P. Anderson took charge of the asylum. Mr. Anderson, a successful business man of Canada, had heard of the great work being done among the lepers of India and felt a call from God to join this work. He offered his services to the Mission to Lepers, and for six years worked most successfully at the head of the asylum in Chandkuri. The lepers had only two criticisms to offer concerning Mr. Anderson and his two predecessors, namely that they did not remain as long as the lepers

desired, and then, that they were bachelors. Especially the leper women missed the Mem Sahib very much, to whom they might have unburdened their hearts.

During the term of all three bachelors building operations were continued. The temporary mud huts were replaced by permanent stone buildings. Mr. Anderson built the large hospital in which the advanced cases are nursed. The funds for this building were donated by the same titled lady who made the first large gift to the asylum. Other large donations were also received by Mr. Anderson. The Evangelical Bethlehem Congregation of Chicago donated the funds for one of the women's wards, and some friends



Mr. W. H. P. Anderson

made it possible to erect a men's ward in memory of Mr. Anderson's father. A special gift was also received for a separate home for untainted girls. This home, called the Gertrude Home, by request of the donor, was built near the road, a short distance in front of the asylum. A similar home for untainted boys was built in 1915.

Mr. Anderson was also successful in gaining the cooperation of the Indian Government. In 1904 the first Government grant was made to the asylum. Irregular grants were received after that until 1908, when the Government began to grant monthly allowances of fifty cents per adult member and twenty-five cents per leper child. This rate of assistance was increased in 1913 and again in

1920. Many building grants also were received, the Government paying half of the cost of many buildings.

In 1908 an important addition was made to the Institution when the Government Leper Asylum of Nagpur was moved to Chandkuri. To the asylum in Nagpur had been assigned the destitute lepers found in the bazaars of the larger cities of the Central Provinces. But neither the lepers nor the Government were satisfied with conditions there. It was impossible to secure the right superintendent. The Government therefore in 1908 requested the mission for permission to add some buildings to the Chandkuri asylum and place the Government lepers in charge of the missionary there. The arrangements were completed, the Government acquired the necessary ground, and erected two wards for men and one for women. The Government, of course, paid for the buildings as



Interior, Men's Ward

well as the maintenance of the lepers in these wards. The number of lepers in the Government wards varies from fifteen to forty. They are treated in all respects as the lepers in the mission wards, with one important exception, namely, that while the latter are at liberty to come and go as they please, the former are required to remain in the asylum.

In 1912 Mr. Anderson was honored by being appointed general secretary of the Mission to Lepers, and as such moved to headquarters in Edinburgh. His place in Chandkuri was taken by Rev. M. P. Davis. Unfortunately, Rev. Davis, after a stay of only nine months in Chandkuri was forced to return to America because of his wife's sickness. Again a bachelor came to the asylum—con-

times Mr. Koenig with a smile—for I was unmarried when I took charge of the asylum. But I fulfilled the earnest desire of many of the leper women by presenting them with a Mem Sahib before I passed on my work to my successor. This was in January, 1917, when I was asked to take charge of the general work of the station. Since then your host, Mr. Waggoner, is superintendent, as we believe, who came to us in a providential way when we were in dire

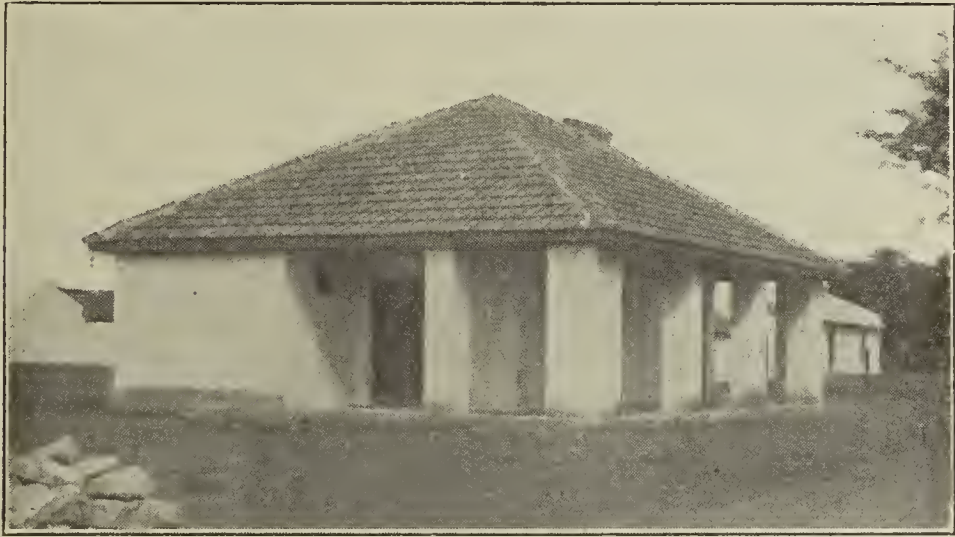


Rev. M. P. Davis and Family

need of workers. During these years the asylum naturally continued to grow, but this you may as well go to see yourself. The worst heat of the day has passed, Mr. Waggoner, I am sure, is now ready to take you over to the asylum, and I will be glad to go with you.—

IV. A General View of the Asylum

We pass out of the mission compound into the road, follow this north for some hundred yards, pass the village church, and part of Baitalpur village, and then turn to the left into a gravel walk. Before us is a large open space, and beyond that the asylum proper. To our right is the home for untainted boys, to our left the fine Gertrude Home for girls, and behind that a number of quarters for asylum employees. We follow the gravelled walk past the office building where the asylum records are kept and come to the main entrance of the institution. One of the stone pillars supporting the gate bears a stone plate with the inscription: The Claire Leper Asylum, Founded 1897: while the other quotes Psalm 147: The Lord's delight is in them that fear Him and put their trust in His mercy.



Office

Before we enter the asylum we are to become acquainted with leprosy in all its hideousness. Near the gate we see crouching on the ground some forms that scarcely seem human. A few dirty rags hide their nakedness. Dirty blood-stained strips of cloth are wrapped about deformed and ulcerated hands and feet. A small bundle containing all their possessions and a staff on which they have supported themselves lies beside them. Fingerless stumps of hands are stretched out towards us while voices hoarse with leprosy cry out: Sahib, maharaj, daya kar, hammarte hein: which is, translated: Sir, O great king, have mercy on us. We are dying. To us the sight is gruesome, tho the missionaries have become accustomed to it. Since the opening of the asylum over two thousand lepers have sat at this place. Very few have asked in vain. Pleadingly we look at Mr. Waggoner to see what will be done in this case. But

there is no need of pleading. A few questions have convinced the missionary of the need of these people; an attendant is directed to take them to the office, where they will be registered, cleaned and bandaged, provided with clean clothes, and then be led to their new home in one of the wards.

As we enter the asylum we follow a well-laid-out and shaded walk leading directly to the church. To our left we pass some store rooms and then the neat little school, where the leper children and some adults who have a desire for an education are taught to read, but very few to write, for the simple reason that most of them have no fingers. School is not held at this time of the afternoon, but a glimpse thru the open door reveals the teacher's desk and chair and a few maps and picture rolls on the wall, but no seats for



Twilight Service at Hospital

the pupils. These sit, as is the universal custom in India, on the floor. Behind the school is a small compound, containing the Observation Ward, where children are kept until it can be decided whether they can be placed in a home for healthy children or must remain with the lepers.

Now we have reached the center of the asylum. Directly in front of us is the fine little church. To the right of it, the still finer hospital. Behind these buildings we catch a glimpse of the store and carpenter shop. On our left is a group of buildings surrounded by a stone wall, the wards for women. To our right is a large, well kept lawn, and beyond that another group of buildings, the wards for men. All the buildings are white-washed and covered with red tiles. Gravel walks kept scrupulously clean lead from one

to another. Many trees planted along the walks provide abundant shade. Order and cleanliness is observed on all sides, and the picture presented is indeed a pleasant one and a credit to the mission and the missionaries.

We decide to enter the church first of all. A class of lepers preparing for baptism is just receiving instruction. As we enter the neat and simple building, the instructor of the class, the asylum evangelist, comes to greet us, and friendly *salaams* are heard from the class of about sixty leper men and women, seated on matting spread over the cement floor of the church. As we look about we notice the absence of any luxurious furniture usually associated with a church. Simple chairs and altar and reading desk are found on the platform, two stone tablets, one inscribed in Hindi with the Lord's Prayer, and the other with the ten commandments, decorate



Dispensary

the front wall, and a side niche provides a few benches for the healthy employees and their families, otherwise there is no furniture. But the spiritual atmosphere prevailing and the religious results achieved in this place are a nobler furnishing.

The class before us are lepers who have asked to be prepared for baptism. No one coming to the asylum is in any way forced in religious matters, but practically every leper, after a short time in the institution comes forward to be admitted to the church. The love they experience from the hands of Christians, after having been disowned by the members of their own religion, leads them to Him who has implanted this love into the hearts of His followers. Thus there is always a large class under instruction, which is given by the superintendent with the help of an evangelist. The instruction must necessarily be simple, being restricted to the life of

Christ, the Lord's Prayer, the ten commandments, and a simple outline of Bible teaching. Sometimes even this is more than many of the simple folks can grasp. Thus it once happened that an old mother of over sixty, who simply could not memorize some of the lessons, and therefore had been put back repeatedly, finally asked whether the matter could not be adjusted by giving her just a little bit of baptism, because she could learn only part of the lessons: she declared she would be satisfied with only a few drops of water.

In spite of such occurrences, it is a pleasure to note how well many lepers are acquainted with the Bible. Mr. Waggoner inquires whether we wish to test the class before us, and accordingly we ask him to have one man relate an incident from the life of Christ, another to recite the Lord's Prayer, and one of the women to re-

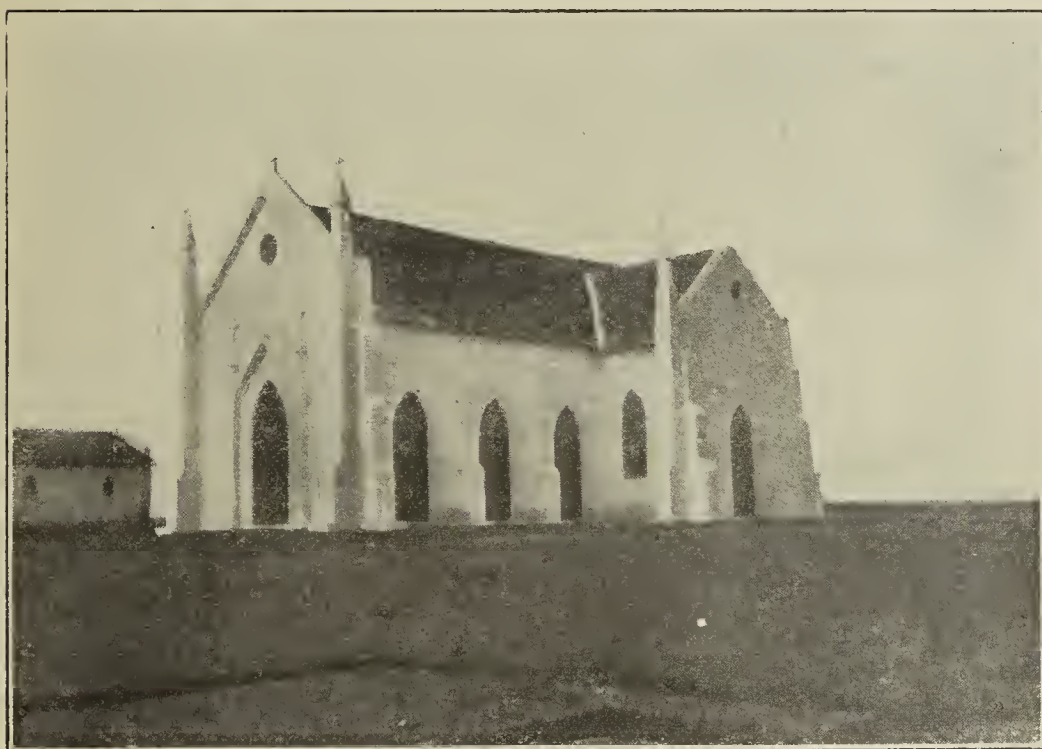


Interior, Women's Ward

cite a hymn. The promptness with which the answers come assures us that lessons are well learned, altho we understand nothing of what is said. We ask Mr. Waggoner whether the Gospel teachings prove to have an effect upon the lives of the lepers and are assured that it has. In fact it is the phase of work amongst lepers which brings the most satisfaction. In temporal matters we can at best bring them some relief in the last few years of life, while the spiritual growth that is often observed is marvellous. Outcast lepers are often most quarrelsome and vicious, even criminal people, fearing neither God nor man, but most of those in the asylum become kind, helpful and obedient. It is wonderful how lives are changed thru the Gospel, how even these lowest outcasts can be raised and saved by Christ. And if many Christians in the

asylum lag behind their brethren in America as far as intellectual understanding of Christianity is concerned, they often excel in a simple strong faith in Jesus, and trust and hope in God."

On Sundays the church is a crowded place. There is barely room for the whole congregation, for every one who can manage to be up and about wants to go to church. Tho the singing is not very melodious, as most lepers have hoarse voices, it makes up in fervor what it lacks in beauty. *Bhajans*, or Christian songs set to Indian melody, are most beloved, tho the lepers would not be embarrassed when called upon to sing a Western hymn, such as Jesus, Saviour, Pilot Me. All songs must be memorized, of course, as only two or three inmates of the institution are able to read. The sermon delivered by the missionary must be simple and adapted to the knowl-



Church in Asylum

edge of the audience, and abound in illustrations. The close attention always paid by the lepers shows how they comprehend and appreciate the sermon. No service is closed without an offering being taken, for the lepers are taught and are glad to give. It is surprising that they are able to save anything out of their meager allowance of only four pecks of rice and forty-five cents a month. Nevertheless the offerings in a year amount to over \$150 and are sufficient to pay the salary of the asylum evangelist and for substantial contributions to the Bible Society and Christian Tract Society.

On Sunday afternoons Sunday school is held, which has an enrollment of over three hundred. Tho in organization and equipment it lags much behind such institutions in America, the result achieved is often more satisfactory. During the week morning prayers are held early every day, by which the spiritual life of the inmates is much benefited. It is interesting to know that on one occasion when the lepers were asked to quote the Bible verse he or she liked best, the following were amongst the answers: Rejoice in the Lord always; as one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and, they that sow in tears will reap in joy.

From the church we move on to the hospital. This is a large building of pleasing architectural design. As we pass along the



Altar in Church

veranda we see thru the windows two large high rooms with floors of cement. On cots a number of patients are lying who are brought here from the wards because the disease has progressed so far that they cannot help themselves. The nursing is done voluntarily by some of their leper friends. Some small reward as an extra piece of cloth may be given at Christmas to those rendering such extra service. The medical treatment is given by a trained Indian doctor, employed by the mission. Such doctors are, however, very scarce, and it is difficult to find one willing to treat leper patients. The superintendent therefore is frequently minus the aid of a

trained doctor, and then the duty of supervising the medical work rests entirely upon him.

Most cases brought to the hospital are so far advanced that it is usually only a matter of giving as much relief as possible before the end comes. No cure for leprosy has as yet been found. All that can be done is giving relief and checking somewhat the rapid development of the disease. The death rate in the asylum therefore is naturally high. The number that is put to rest in the cemetery at a small distance behind the asylum exceeds seventy-five per year. How sad would be the work among lepers if the eye of faith could not pierce the veil, and see these mutilated bodies arise



Supervising the Dressing of Wounds

cleansed and clothed in heavenly splendor on the day of resurrection. The great majority of those who have passed thru the asylum have left believing fully in a new life to come where "death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more."

But medical men still hope to find a cure for leprosy. Many experiments are being made and our asylum helps in this work. Great hopes were placed in Nastine and Antileprolin, remedies de-

vised on a serum principle, but both proved to be failures in our asylum as elsewhere. The best results so far have been achieved by treatments with the old and well known Chaulmoogra oil. Tho no cures have resulted, its regular use combined with nourishing diet and antiseptic care of the wounds, gives much relief and checks to some extent the rapid advance of leprosy. The newest treatments are modifications of this oil. An extraction from Chaulmoogra called sodium gynocardite, being dissolved and injected into the muscles and veins is at present being tested at the asylum.

While showing us thru the hospital Mr. Waggoner has been giving us these explanations and we have arrived at the dispensary. Here, back of the hospital, we find a group of lepers and the Indian doctor busy dispensing medicines to them. One has tonsillitis, another trouble with his eyes, and a third asks for *tanda dawai*, cold medicine, as a well known laxative is popularly known in India. Off to the side three leper men sit busily engaged in cleaning and bandaging wounds. A small mountain of bandages lies beside them, for the number of patients they attend to in a day is great. In a box near them are a number of instruments which they use to amputate decayed fingers and toes and sometimes whole hands. Thru much experience these men have become very skillful in their work.

We pass thru this busy scene to another interesting building called the shop or store, situated behind the hospital. Here can be seen huge stocks of rice, for each Friday, when every inmate of the institution receives a peck of rice, a small mountain of grain is distributed. This weekly peck of rice with two sets of clothing and forty-five cents a month is all that the lepers receive. It would be impossible for Europeans to live on such an allowance, but the lepers are very content, for this is more than they ever had before. The forty-five cents a month must suffice for all the pepper, salt, lentiles, wood and other extras a leper may want, and still they manage to save something for the church offering and for a rainy day.

V. In the Ward for Women

We next wish to see the lepers in their homes, and so pass thru a gate into the enclosure reserved for women. The center of this enclosure forms a large open space laid out in lawns with a number of flower beds. At one end is a high well where healthy men are employed to draw water into a tank. From here the women are allowed to help themselves, while for those who cannot carry their own waterpots, water is brought to the wards. On two sides of the open space are single rows of buildings, while on the third side there are three rows. These twenty-four buildings are similar

in shape, built of stone and covered with red tile. Each building contains three rooms, 12x12, with a veranda in front and is designed to accommodate twelve patients.

The women have heard that visitors are coming, for as we enter, a delegation of leaders is seen near the entrance. They have put on their very best *saris*, and have used an extra amount of oil in combing their black hair, so that it *glitters* in the sunshine. Poor folks, they know that they are not to touch us, therefore they stand respectfully away from the walk. Bandages, seen here and there, remind us of ulcers that must be suffered. Their fingerless hands and other deformities are hidden as much as possible by their clothing. It is plainly evident that these are sick people, but as we



Mr. Anderson and Assistants

peer into their faces we notice more of content and happiness than of suffering. Surely a wonderful transformation as compared with those we met at the gate begging for admission!

The leader of the delegation is *Bayan*, who greets and welcomes us in the name of her sisters to the asylum. Mr. Waggoner translates her words for us. Bayan also wishes to know where our home is, what the object of our visit is, whether we have families, and other things, for the lepers are interested in every one that shows an interest in them. After we have satisfied her curiosity as much as we see fit, we pass on to the first ward. The inmates

are lined up and waiting to greet us with a friendly *salaam*. As we chat with these folks we can observe leprosy in all its stages. While many do not seem to suffer much, others can barely stand upright, and we are told of some confined to their rooms. We notice that two of the women whenever spoken to, always hide their faces behind their *saris*. Mr. Waggoner explains that these are newcomers, and that their action is but the expression of the reserve Indian women naturally feel in the presence of men.

Thus we pass on to the second ward and then to the third, for we dare skip none, for fear that the inmates will feel slighted. On the veranda of one ward we notice some rags lying about. It is only necessary for Mr. Waggoner to point to them without a word. Immediately one of the women picks them up and takes them away, for cleanliness is one of the lessons taught in the asylum. As we peer into the rooms we notice that order is observed everywhere. The wooden cots are placed upright in the corner. The clay fire-places are kept clean, and every leper woman has acquired a box in which she keeps her clothing and possessions.

At another ward we notice a woman carrying a boy of about three years on her hips. She is evidently proud of her son, for he is a healthy looking chap in spite of the fact that his mother, who has nursed him to this day, is a leper. Tho we examine him closely, not the least sign of leprosy can be discovered. How fortunate that leprosy is not hereditary, and that children seem to be immune to infection until they reach the age of four or five. Women often bring babies with them when they enter the asylum. They are permitted to keep their babies until they reach the age of four and then are requested to place them in the observation ward, where the children are kept until they can safely be put into the home for untainted children. Usually the mothers submit to the separation, but cases have occurred where the mother would rather leave the asylum than give up the child.

One of the wards which we visit is the Government ward for women. These patients are treated just as the other lepers, with the exception that they are not permitted to leave the asylum. Another ward is of great interest to us. Here some twelve girls are lined up ranging in age from six to eighteen. How sad is their lot, for they are all lepers. Some show as yet only the first signs, others have already developed ulcers, while a few have lost a finger or more. Siki, a bright and dependable young woman, who herself was raised in this home, is a mother to these girls. For some hours daily they attend the leper school, and the rest of the time are allowed to play. Siki, Bayan, and the missionary try to help them forget their sad lot as much as possible. About six leper boys lead

a similar life in one of the rooms of the men's ward. Some are orphans, others have a father or mother living in the asylum. One boy was found, his body covered with leper ulcers, in a bazaar with nobody to claim him. Kaehri, a girl, came as a baby to the asylum. When at the proper age, the mother would not consent to placing her in the untainted home, but rather left the asylum. After a year she returned. Kaehri had in the meanwhile developed leprosy and had to be placed with the leper children. It is not always easy to help these poor children forget their sad plight. A small girl whose case was much advanced and who suffered much pain was so depressed that nothing seemed to make her happy. Even the stories of Jesus made no impression upon her, until one day



One of the Buildings of Women's Ward

the missionaries daughter presented her nicest doll to this girl. That broke the ice, and since then this leper girl has learned to believe in love, and has herself become a lovely character.

Two rooms of a ward are occupied by the leper girls. The third room is also of great interest. Altho we see no cots and no fireplaces, there are evidences that the room is much used. The floor is carefully plastered and on the walls hang a number of colored Bible pictures. It is a prayer room reserved for this purpose by special request of the women. Many a secret prayer is offered here during the day, and this is the place where Bayan on her own initiative takes the newcomers to give them their first instructions in Christianity.

We have nearly completed the rounds of the women's wards. Our leader has had much to do, as besides answering all our ques-

tions, he also had to listen to many requests from the women. Several times he was asked to enter a room for a prayer with some very sick patient. Several women have asked for permission to make a short visit with some relatives in their home village. At intervals such permission is given, because it helps to make the inmates more contented. It is wonderful that these lepers, altho once cast out of house and home, still retain some love for their relatives. A mother may even manage to save a little from her meager allowance for a son or daughter living in the villages. But now we must hurry on to the men's ward, or we will not have finished before evening.

VI. The Wards for Men

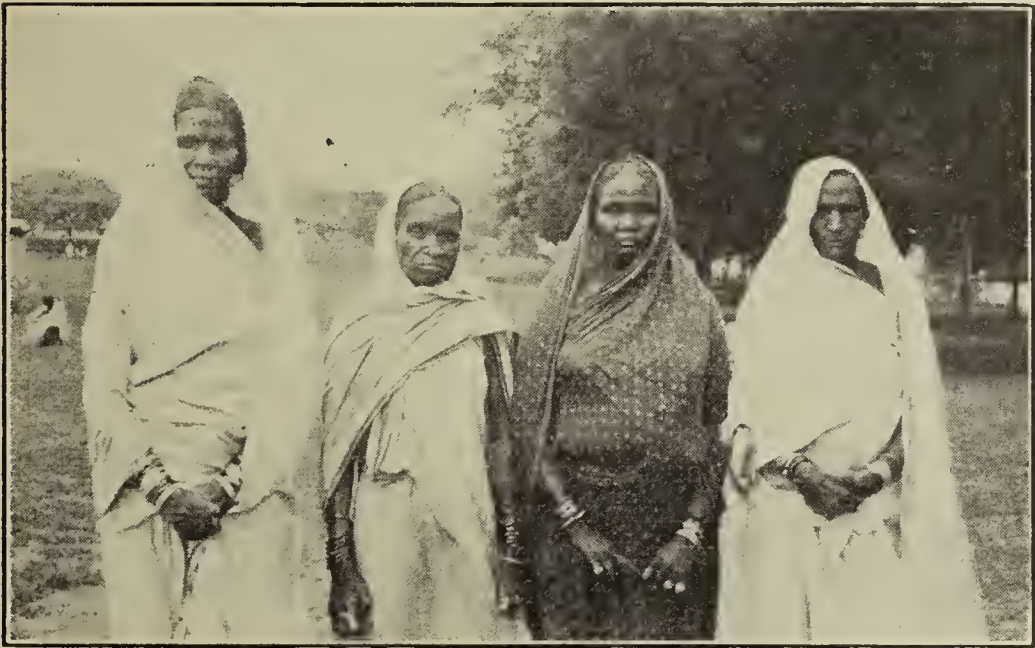
Passing over the lawn in front of the church and hospital, we come to the wards for men. These are not surrounded by enclosures, excepting the wire fence that runs around the entire asylum. The wards for men contain six rooms each, and accommodate twenty-four patients. The eight wards are built in two rows with sufficient space in between to give the patients plenty of air. The last two wards were erected by the Government, and in them are placed the lepers sent by the courts. While there are nearly three hundred women, there are only a hundred and fifty men in the asylum, due to the fact that a woman, after becoming a leper, is more quickly turned out of house and home than a man. The life of a beggar is also more easy to a man than a woman, and therefore the leper women seek the shelter of the asylum sooner than the men.

We notice that the men have also heard of our coming, and have prepared a special welcome for us. As we approach their wards, we hear something that resembles music. Anxious to hear what this may mean, we pass the first wards to the middle of the compound, and there see a large group of men seated in a circle on the grass. In the center of the circle a man with a large long drum, suspended from his neck, is seen moving about with a rhythmic step while beating his drum at both ends with his hands. Around about him a dozen men are moving in different directions, some of them beating cymbals, and all of them chanting a song. Many of the men seated on the grass are also singing, while the others are intently listening to what is going on.

Can these men, seemingly so joyful, all be under the awful doom of leprosy? Yes, they are. Those in the center are such with whom the disease is not advanced, while the others sitting about are too weak or otherwise physically unable to take part in the exercise. The men enjoy such doings very much. Every morning after they have performed their daily tasks—for all lepers who are physically able to do so are required to help in keeping

the grounds clean and performing similar easy labor—they will gather in groups to amuse themselves. Music takes an important part in their entertainment. Many of the men have become experts with the drum and cymbles, while some even try to perform on a small Indian violin. The songs they sing are usually *bhajans*, the Christian songs set to old Indian melodies, so much beloved by Hindus.

Now the men are performing for our benefit. As we watch them we notice the keen enjoyment seen in most faces. We cannot but think how much better off these men are in the asylum than if they were still roaming the villages. Suddenly the music comes to a halt. The singers bring out a ringing *jai jai!* Which means



Leper Women in Asylum

Hail, Hail! And which is taken up and continued by all the members of the group. This is our welcome and we are expected to make a little speech. This we do, telling them of our joy in seeing them so happy and contented. We express to them the love of their friends beyond the ocean, and point to the Friend above, who made a greater sacrifice for us all than any earthly friend ever can. Mr. Waggoner interprets our speech as well as that of Dayadan, who makes a fitting answer in behalf of the lepers.

While we now pass around the different wards inspecting the rooms with their roughly made beds of bamboos and grass ropes, Mr. Waggoner tells us a story of Dayadan. He was a member of the Chamar caste, which is so numerous in Chhattisgarh, and of which we have more representatives in the asylum than of any

other. This caste is much despised by other Hindus, as they originally had that so much despised occupation of skinning dead animals. Many Chamars are thieves and criminals by profession. Their lives are very immoral, many practices connected with their religion being so vile that they cannot be described. Still, many of our best converts come from this low caste. In Dayadan's youth he became acquainted with a witch doctor from whom he learned the art of magic. Dayadan still believes that he once possessed supernatural powers at that time. He went about from place to place performing miracles, having special powers to cure snakebite. For a while all went well and Dayadan became quite wealthy. Then suddenly misfortune came, leprosy developed, he spent all his money in attempting cures, and he became a wandering beggar. Dayadan believes his misfortunes were due to the jealousy of the evil powers he once served. During his wanderings he heard of our leper asylum where he found a shelter and soon felt thoroly at home. He took great interest in the religious instruction, learned exceedingly well, and what is more important, contact with Christ changed his entire life, and he became a thoro Christian. He gained a position of great influence among his fellow sufferers in the asylum, became their leader and spokesman and could always be counted upon to support the superintendent in all matters. Dayadan had special gifts of music; he organized a little band, and was a leader of all the singing in and out of church.

Of course, Mr. Waggoner continues, not all men are as reliable as Dayadan, just as among the women there are some that cause the superintendent worries. Some are often given to quarreling, others are tempted to steal. It is not always easy to discover the guilty one, but when discovered, discipline is necessary. Usually a light punishment, such as withholding some rice or money, suffices to settle the matter. Very seldom expulsion is necessary. Frequently a leper is carried away by his wanderlust to leave the asylum. After several months they usually return, begging to be taken in again. If asked why they left the asylum, they usually answer: *Man udas ho gayia*, which translated literally means: My heart became sad, but figuratively expresses that the desire for the free life once lived in roaming about the villages tempted them until they could not resist. Unless the leper has left the asylum too frequently, he will be readmitted after a small fine has been placed upon him. With such characters, much patient work is necessary. Patient treatment, combined with continued instruction from the Word of God usually results in building up Christian character.

While missionary Waggoner has been giving us the details, we have reached the last of the men's wards, and are now ready to

leave the asylum to inspect the homes for untainted children. We have looked upon many faces. We have seen there, deep traces of past suffering and misery. We have also noticed much bodily suffering which is beyond human power of relief. But as we look deeper we notice that underlying it all there is general contentment and happiness. An official who once visited the asylum wrote into the visitors' book that he saw more genuine happiness than generally found in India. What a splendid testimony to the Christian service offered in the institution! Christ's love, as expressed thru the services of His ministers, changes the misery of leprosy to contentment in the will of God, and the deepest despair into faith and hope of a better future.



Untainted Boys of Leper Parents

VII. The Homes for Untainted Children

We now leave the asylum by the same gate used on entering, and pass along the walk to the right, passing a number of homes for asylum employees. Here live the families of the caretaker, evangelist and doctor of the asylum. We take the opportunity to speak with some of them and meet the wife of the evangelist, who is employed as a Bible woman and visits the sick women who cannot attend the services. Soon we reach the Gertrude Home for Girls, which consists of a few buildings surrounded by a stone wall. As we approach the same, our memories are carried back to childhood days, for do we not hear the familiar words: "A tasket, a green and yellow basket; I sent a letter to my love, and on the way I lost it." As we come nearer, however, we recognize that the words are not English, but Hindi ones used to the well-known tune. As

we pass thru the entrance we see a group of girls playing drop the handkerchief, just as it is played in America. Yes, they love to play, these dark-eyed daughters of India, in their picturesque Indian costumes. Who are these forty girls who have found such a happy home? They one and all are children of leper parents. Some have a leper mother, others a leper father, while both parents of some are lepers. Here a home has been provided for them where they are safe from infection, which they could hardly escape had they remained with their parents.

We watch the larger girls at their play, while some of the smaller ones, barely five years old, look up to us with such appealing eyes that we cannot refrain from picking them up and fondling them. Then the girls are asked to sing us some songs, which they are glad to do. Next we inspect the buildings, going thru the large dormitory where neatly folded bedding along the walls shows where the girls sleep on the floor, passing to the kitchen where some of the older girls prepare the meals for the whole household, and along the wide veranda where the girls play during the rainy season. Each girl has a little box and we ask one or two of them to show us their treasures. They reveal to us several *saries*, or dresses, a new one for Sunday, and several old ones to be worn while at work, an old well worn doll, left over from last Christmas, and a necklace of glass beads, the gift of a fond mother.

This home is the special sphere of the superintendent's wife, and as Mrs. Waggoner had to leave us some time before to attend to household duties, Mrs. Koenig, who for some time has had charge of the home answers the many questions we have to ask. She tells us how the girls spend their days.

In the morning they are up quite early but do not eat breakfast at once like children in America. They wash and take great pains in oiling their beautiful black hair until it is smooth and glossy. They also never fail to clean their teeth, for which they use a new brush every day. Hindus cannot understand how Europeans can use a tooth brush for a long time. The brush used in India is however not as expensive, being made of the crushed end of a twig each morning by the user. After tidying up the home, the girls hurry off to school, which begins at seven o'clock.

All the girls attend the mission village school for girls. There are six classes beside the infant class. This is called a vernacular middle school and is the only one of its kind in Drug, a district of 628,000 population. There are, however, about twenty girls' schools up to the fourth class, called primary schools in this district. In the infant class the girls are taught the letters of the alphabet by means of tamarine seeds. They each have a board on which the teacher

draws two or three letters which the children follow up with seeds. Later they can make them by memory. Thus they learn by and by to learn and read the letters of the alphabet, fifty-three in number. One peculiar method of teaching is to have the children learn each letter in connection with some well known thing, for instance, for the letter K, they learn *Kapra*, which means clothes, and for G, Gay, which is the Hindi word for cow.

After learning all the letters thoroly, which generally takes a year, they are promoted to the first class, and school life begins in earnest. All the girls are taught many pretty songs, both Indian and American, and they learn to sing the Western tunes quite well. In the higher classes they are brought quite far, being taught about



Untainted Girls of Leper Parents

the same subjects as in the grammar schools at home. For a girl with a sixth class certificate, a place is always open as a teacher in a primary school. After passing the sixth class, some of the brighter girls are sent to normal school, and thus become better equipped teachers. A great number of the girls of our Home are now employed as teachers, or are the wives of catechists and teachers. Some are laboring for the Lord as Bible women.

The first half hour each day is devoted to religious instruction in each class of the school. Twice a week the girls are taught sewing and fancy work. They learn the different kinds of mending, sewing plain garments by hand, knitting, crocheting, and drawn-thread work. The latter they do especially well. At 9:30 A. M. they have recess and go home to eat *basi*, food left over from the evening meal, after which they return to school until twelve o'clock.

Then they eat their midday meal, which is cooked by one of the larger girls. There is always a large pot of rice, and either *dal*, a kind of dried pea, or vegetables. Once a month they have a meal consisting of rice and meat curry. The food is always cooked very tasty, but a trifle too hot for American palates.

From two to four P. M. the girls study their lessons for the next day. After this they are free to play, read, or tidy up their home. They take turns at the latter, and also at cooking the food. They like to gather together and sing songs or play games, both Indian and American. Behind the dormitory is a small garden in which the girls raise their vegetables. At sundown the bell is heard for evening services in the mission church across the way, where they attend regularly every evening. After prayers, they eat their evening meal, and then are soon off to slumberland, dreaming of things to come in the future which would be a blighted one but for the love of Christian people across the sea, who have made possible the Gertrude Home for Girls.

Those evening bells just mentioned, soon will ring, and we have still to visit the boys in their home. We walk along the road in order to reach it. It is one of the latest buildings of the asylum, completed in 1915. One end of the large enclosure is formed by the large dormitory. The front wall of this building is built up only three feet, and a space above left entirely open to give the boys plenty of air all the year around. At one end the room is reserved for the sick, which fortunately is seldom used. In one corner of the compound is found the home for the housefather, a post assigned to one of the teachers, in another corner is the kitchen. We are soon convinced that happiness reigns in this home as well as among the girls. Some of the larger boys are returning from work in the garden, located just behind the home. Another group of boys is playing football outside with the village boys, while the smaller ones are amusing themselves in their own ways.

The daily routine for the boys is very similar to that of the girls' home. They attend the vernacular middle school of the village. Those who pass with credit are helped to enter the mission theological school or the Government normal school in Raipur. Some of the best evangelists and teachers in the mission are the rescued sons of lepers. Not all the boys, however, are fit for or have a desire for such a position. Some become farmers, or carpenters, or adopt some other profession. Some of the masons and carpenters at work at the building operations constantly going on in the asylum or in the mission are former boys of this home. After they have passed thru the school or have taken up a profession, the young men usually marry girls from the Gertrude Home. Many

Christian homes have thus been founded, and there is no case on record in which the children of such marriages have developed leprosy. What would have been the lot of these young people, had they remained with their leper parents and not come under Christian care! Are not these Christian homes a testimony to the saving power of Christ?

But there go the church bells, and the boys are already forming in line to walk over to the village church. We follow after them and soon see the girls approaching from the opposite direction. The interior of the village church is just as plain as that in the asylum, with the exception that benches are provided for the congregation. Besides the untainted boys and girls, some of the mission employees with their families and a number of Christians from the village come to the evening service. After a song, the missionary reads the scripture lesson, gives a short explanation of the same, and then offers prayer. As the service is conducted in Hindi, we understand nothing of it, but the close attention given by everyone and the atmosphere of reverence prevailing leads us naturally to worship with our Indian brethren. At the close of the service we recognize the doxology and join in singing a heartfelt: Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise Him all peoples here below, Praise Him above ye heavenly host, Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Conclusion

As we pass out of church, the Indian twilight has given way to darkness, and every one seeks his home. We also follow our host to his home and partake of a simple evening repast. As it is too hot in the house, we spend the rest of the evening sitting out in front of the bungalow in easy wicker chairs, conversing with the missionary folks. The many impressions received this day, however, have made us very tired, so that we are soon ready to retire. Our host shows us where we are to rest, and here we are due to end the day with another unusual experience. Our beds have been prepared for us out in the open air on one side of the bungalow. As we remember the stifling heat we learn to be very thankful for this Indian custom.

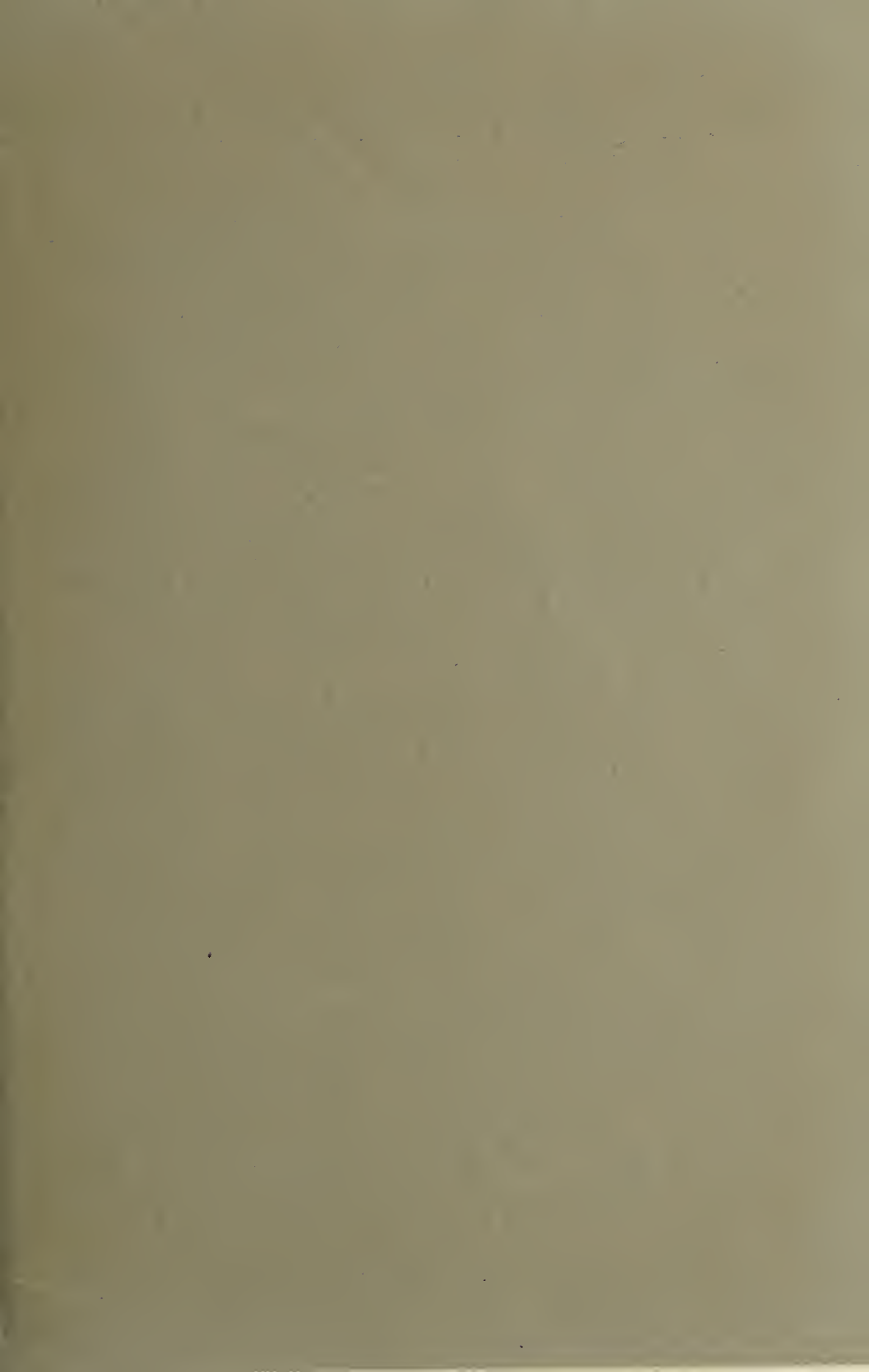
As we lie gazing up into the clear starlit sky over us, our mind reviews the many experiences of the day. We have seen the home in which misery is changed into content, where little children are saved from a horrible future, where the poorest despised outcast is led to Him who gives peace to the soul and hope for the future. How much good has been done in that institution just across the road from where we are sleeping!

It is exactly twenty-five years since the asylum has been founded. During these years more than 2,500 lepers have found a haven of refuge there. How much suffering has been relieved, how many tearful faces have been changed to happy ones! Most of those unfortunate ones have passed away and now lie abreast in the cemetery beyond the asylum, waiting for the glorious day of resurrection. Their bodily disease could not be cured, but most of them have come to know Him who cleanseth the soul from the leprosy of sin. Statistics show that over 1,500 lepers have accepted Christ and were baptized in Chandkuri. Over 300 children were rescued from the worst of bodily diseases, and given an opportunity to become useful Christian characters.

What better investment could be made than helping the work of such an asylum? Where would money bring greater returns in contentment, joy and happiness, more spiritual returns of faith, love and hope? Only five hundred dollars are necessary to build a home for twelve leper women, and one thousand dollars will erect a shelter where twenty-four leper men can find a refuge. Should not thousands of Christians be found ready to give, out of thankfulness for being spared a similar sad lot, twenty-five dollars per year to support one of the lepers or one of the untainted boys or girls?

As we close our eyes to rest, we determine henceforth to do all we can to help this noble work and to win for it many friends, so that with its mission of loving service it may always reach greater numbers of these poorest of the poor. We close the day with prayer: "Lord, strengthen thy ministers engaged in this noble service. O Christ, Thou who hast died for every sinner, permit Thyself to be found by these unfortunate ones who have experienced so much misery. O Father above, awaken in the hearts of Thy children all over the world a true brotherly love, that may reach out to succor many more of these their brethren, living in greatest misery across the ocean." And as we breathe this prayer, a voice seems to answer within us: *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.*





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